

**43rd ANNUAL MEETING – SEPTEMBER 2021****Performance Review Recommendation #26:  
Data Classification – NAFO Meeting Documentation  
(Prepared by the NAFO Secretariat)****Preamble**

In response to Recommendation #26 of the 2018 NAFO Performance Review, the *Ad Hoc virtual NAFO Website Re-Design Working Group: Data Classification* has been working on the development of a formal policy regarding the posting and distribution of meeting documentation.

- The 2018 NAFO Performance Review Panel, Recommendation 26, Chapter V.3.2 reads ***“Recommends NAFO makes all working documents publicly available, unless otherwise requested by a Contracting Party or subject to confidentiality rules.”***

The *Ad hoc* Virtual Working Group **agreed** that a hybrid meeting documentation policy could ensure transparency without impeding efficiency.

This hybrid meeting documentation policy may include:

- **Prior to the start of a meeting**, NAFO meeting documentation, such as Working Papers, that is received and deemed open access be made available to the general public on the NAFO website.  
Each NAFO group is requested to consider the criteria and procedure to determine whether a particular NAFO meeting document can be deemed “open access”.
- **During the meeting**, NAFO meeting documentation, such as Working Papers, and subsequent revisions be posted on the NAFO Meetings SharePoint.
- **Following the Annual Meeting of NAFO in September**, most meeting documentation, such as Working Papers, that is adopted is converted into a NAFO document and made available to the general public on the NAFO website.

However, before a formal policy could be developed, it was agreed that feedback would be sought from NAFO Bodies, Standing Committees, and Working Groups during upcoming meetings in 2020/2021 (NAFO COM Doc. 20-06).

An update is expected to be provided at the 2021 Annual Meeting of NAFO.

**Challenges during 2020/2021**

The global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic presented challenges in collecting this feedback from all NAFO Bodies, Standing Committees, and Working Groups during the 2020/2021 meeting year.

NAFO continued to conduct its meetings virtually and, as experienced at the last Annual Meeting, a virtual meeting format presents significant time restraints due to the differing time zones of the

NAFO Contracting Parties. Many times, the meeting agenda is prioritized to ensure focused discussions and effective use of meeting time.

The time restraints can prove challenging, at times, to effectively consider all matters for consideration. Consequently, although the core business of NAFO has not been disrupted by the pandemic, certain matters have had to be deferred, including feedback from NAFO Bodies, Standing Committees, and Working Groups regarding the development of a formal policy regarding the posting and distribution of meeting documentation.

### **Completed Work**

In 2021, and despite the above-mentioned challenges, the NAFO Secretariat presented COM WP 21-04 *“Request for Feedback – Ad Hoc virtual NAFO Website Re-Design Working Group: Data Classification”* to those NAFO Bodies, Standing Committees, and Working Groups that were able to discuss this matter during its meeting.

- The discussions of those Working Groups that were able to discuss this matter during its meeting are summarized in Annex 1.
- The Working Paper also contains a table detailing the current policies of each NAFO body regarding the posting and distribution of meeting documentation (Annex 2).

### **Proposed Next Steps**

For that reason, the NAFO Secretariat proposes the following next steps:

- Continue to seek feedback from NAFO Bodies, Standing Committees, and Working Groups during upcoming meetings in 2021/2022.
- Using the information gathered from NAFO Bodies, Standing Committees, and Working Groups, the *Ad Hoc virtual NAFO Website Re-Design Working Group: Data Classification* will continue work on the development of a formal policy regarding the posting and distribution of meeting documentation.

### **Annex 1. Feedback gathered during the 2021/2021 Meeting regarding posting and distribution of meeting documentation**

The NAFO Secretariat presented COM WP 21-04 “*Request for Feedback – Ad Hoc virtual NAFO Website Re-Design Working Group: Data Classification*” to those Working Groups that were able to discuss this matter during its meeting.

It should be noted that the matter of meeting documentation access, as well as confidentiality guidelines, were discussed in greater detail at the *NAFO ad hoc Working Group on STACTIC Participation (WG-SP) Meeting* via WebEx on 25 August 2021.

<b>NAFO Bodies, Standing Committees, and Working Groups</b>	<b>Feedback regarding posting and distribution of meeting documentation</b>
WG-BDS	<p>The NAFO Commission ad hoc Working Group to Reflect on the Rules Governing Bycatches, Discards and Selectivity (WG-BDS) in the NAFO Regulatory Area met via WebEx during 12–13 July 2021.</p> <p>The WG-BDS discussion regarding posting, and distribution of meeting documentation is summarized below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In response to Recommendation #26 of the 2018 NAFO Performance Review, the Ad Hoc virtual NAFO Website Re-Design Working Group: Data Classification was tasked with development of a formal policy regarding the posting and distribution of meeting documentation. This Ad Hoc Working Group will give its report to STACFAD.</li> </ul> <p>At the 2020 Annual Meeting, STACFAD agreed that before a formal policy could be developed, feedback would be sought from NAFO Bodies, Standing Committees, and Working Groups during upcoming meetings in 2020/2021.</p> <p>The Executive Secretary presented COM WP 21-04 and sought feedback of this WG on a policy of making working documents being made accessible to the public.</p> <p>Contracting Parties expressed general support for transparency. However, given the sensitivity of the data contained in some working papers, a blanket policy of making the working documents be made available to the public would run counter to the domestic policy of some Contracting Parties. Some participants indicated they would need further consultations with their respective delegations.</p>
WG-EAFFM	<p>The NAFO Joint Commission-Scientific Council Working Group on the Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management (WG-EAFFM) met via WebEx during 14–16 July 2021 and 20-21 July 2021.</p> <p>The WG-EAFFM discussion regarding posting, and distribution of meeting documentation is summarized below:</p>

NAFO Bodies, Standing Committees, and Working Groups	Feedback regarding posting and distribution of meeting documentation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In alignment with the 2018 Performance Review Panel Recommendations and their implementation, <i>the Ad Hoc virtual NAFO Website Re-design Working Group: Data Classification</i> at the 2020 Annual Meeting of NAFO was tasked with development of a formal policy regarding the posting and distribution of meeting documentations. In this regard, feedback from the WG-EAFFM was sought whether working papers and other meeting working documents be made available to the public by posting them in the NAFO public website.</li> </ul> <p>The Working Group expressed that in principle, there need to be greater transparency. However, there are situations where some documents cannot be made public for confidentiality reasons, <i>e.g.</i>, survey data, memos, papers as a basis for discussion or negotiation.</p>
WG-RBMS	<p>The NAFO Joint Commission-Scientific Council Working Group on Risk-Based Management Strategies (WG-RBMS) Meeting met via WebEx during 24–26 August 2021 via WebEx.</p> <p>The WG-RBMS discussion regarding posting, and distribution of meeting documentation is summarized below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In alignment with the 2018 Performance Review Panel Recommendations and their implementation, <i>the Ad Hoc virtual NAFO Website Re-design Working Group: Data Classification</i> at the 2020 Annual Meeting of NAFO was tasked with development of a formal policy regarding the posting and distribution of meeting documentations. In this regard, feedback from WG-RBMS was sought whether working papers and other meeting working documents be made available to the public by posting them in the NAFO public website.</li> </ul> <p>The WG expressed general support for ongoing efforts to enhance transparency. However, it was noted that there are situations where it may not be appropriate to share documents publicly, in particular for confidentiality reasons, <i>e.g.</i>, catch data.</p>

## Annex 2. Current policy for posting and distribution of meeting documentation

The table below details the current policies of each NAFO body posting and distribution of meeting documentation.

NAFO Bodies, Standing Committees, and Working Groups	Current policy regarding posting and distribution of meeting documentation
NAFO Scientific Council	<p>The working papers of the Scientific Council are neither publicly available on the NAFO website nor available on the password protected NAFO Members' pages.</p> <p>All final SCS (Scientific Council Summary) and SCR (Scientific Council Research) documents are publicly available on the NAFO website.</p>
NAFO Commission	<p>The working papers of the Commission are not publicly available on the NAFO website however they are available on the password protected NAFO Members' pages.</p> <p>Any working papers that are adopted at the Annual Meeting in September, are converted into NAFO documents which are then made publicly available on the NAFO website.</p>
STACFAD	<p>At the 2019 Annual Meeting of NAFO, STACFAD <b>agreed</b> that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following a meeting, STACFAD Working Papers will be made publicly available on the NAFO website (<a href="https://www.nafo.int/">https://www.nafo.int/</a>) with the exception of Working Papers deemed restricted (e.g., personnel matters).</li> </ul> <p>It was further <b>agreed</b> that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An exclusive STACFAD Username and Password will no longer be required to access STACFAD documentation on the NAFO Members' pages.</li> <li>• STACFAD documentation will be available in the NAFO Meetings SharePoint (<a href="https://meetings.nafo.int/">https://meetings.nafo.int/</a>) with the exception of Working Papers deemed restricted (e.g., personnel matters).</li> <li>• Following a meeting, STACFAD Working Papers will be made publicly available on the NAFO website (<a href="https://www.nafo.int/">https://www.nafo.int/</a>) with the exception of Working Papers deemed restricted (e.g., personnel matters).</li> <li>• General Council (GC) and Commission Documents will be made publicly available on the NAFO website (<a href="https://www.nafo.int/">https://www.nafo.int/</a>) with the exception of documents deemed restricted (e.g., personnel matters).</li> </ul>

NAFO Bodies, Standing Committees, and Working Groups	Current policy regarding posting and distribution of meeting documentation
STACTIC	<p>At the 2019 Annual Meeting of NAFO, STACTIC <b>agreed</b> that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any Contracting Party can request to have their own STACTIC working papers posted to the NAFO public website going forward.</li> </ul> <p>It was further <b>agreed</b> that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NAFO vessel registry (vessel flag State, vessel name, radio call sign) be posted to the NAFO public website.</li> <li>• The NAFO Secretariat consolidate the information on the Research Vessels page of the NAFO Members website for review at the 2020 STACTIC Intersessional Meeting, and STACTIC will determine if it is appropriate to be posted to the NAFO public website.</li> <li>• The Provisional Catch Information page of the NAFO Members pages will remain on the NAFO Members pages website and not be posted to the NAFO public website.</li> <li>• Contracting Parties review the material on the Practices and Procedures page to determine which information may be posted to the public website, and which information should be migrated to the NAFO MCS Website at the 2020 STACTIC Intersessional Meeting.</li> <li>• The NAFO Secretariat consolidate the location and gear details information, and create a map showing the locations of the lost gear for review at the 2020 STACTIC Intersessional Meeting, and STACTIC will determine if it is appropriate to be posted to the NAFO public website.</li> <li>• The 3M redfish fishery real time catch uptake (showing total catch amounts) be posted to the NAFO public website.</li> <li>• Any Contracting Party can request to have their own STACTIC working papers posted to the NAFO public website going forward.</li> </ul> <p>Any STACTIC working papers that are adopted by the Commission at the Annual Meeting in September, are converted into NAFO documents which are then made publicly available on the NAFO website.</p>